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VA recognizes VA Bedford HeRO award winners for safety initiatives, COVID-19 efforts

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today it honored Veterans Health Administration (VHA) National HeRO Award recipients Rick Michaud and the Engineering Department from VA Bedford Healthcare System for their contributions to VHA's journey to becoming a high reliability organization (HRO).

VHA's enterprise-wide journey to high reliability aims to continuously improve its processes by maximizing safety and minimizing harm to achieve the goal of ensuring every patient receives excellent care every time.

The awardees were recognized for their safety and process improvement initiatives as well as their COVID-19 response efforts to provide the best possible care to Veterans. Their accomplishments include establishing effective negative air anterooms to COVID-19 units and converting clinical space into a new COVID-19 inpatient unit, thus increasing facility bed capacity and helping to contain the spread of the disease.

"I've always known we have a remarkable team at VA Bedford and I'm proud others recognize it as well," VA New England Healthcare System (VISN 1) Director Ryan Lilly stated. "COVID-19 has challenged the entire health care community, and even during these unpredictable times, these recipients have dedicated themselves to continuous improvement to ensure VHA delivers the best care possible. Veterans have a champion on their side when it comes to Rick Michaud and the Engineering Department."

Each of the 11 teams and individuals were nominated by top leadership in one of five categories: Clinical individual from a Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) or facility, non-clinical individual from a VISN or facility, clinical team from a VISN or facility, non-clinical team from a VISN or facility, and individual or team from VHA central office.

The National HeRO Award is the highest level of HRO recognition available within VHA and is reserved to honor employees who advance VHA's journey to high reliability through demonstration of VHA's HRO principles in action. The HRO steering committee votes quarterly to select one winner in each category for a National HeRO Award.

Learn more about VA's journey to high reliability at [VA National Center for Patient Safety](#).

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